



UNIVERSITY OF  
**LINCOLN**

**Research Degrees Regulations for MA/MSc by  
Research, MPhil and PhD  
2016 / 2017**

## **Research Degrees Regulations for MA/MSc by Research, MPhil and PhD 2016/2017**

These regulations govern the progression and award of postgraduate research degrees at the University of Lincoln. These regulations are made under the University Regulations 2016/2017, which are published separately.

These regulations supersede all previous regulations governing the progression and award of postgraduate research degrees at the University of Lincoln, which are hereby revoked.

1 August 2016

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# Regulations for the Award of the University's Degrees of MA/MSc by Research, Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy 2016/2017

## 1. General

- 1.1 These Regulations establish the conditions under which the University of Lincoln (hereinafter referred to as the 'University') shall award the degrees of Masters by Research (MSc by Research, MA by Research), Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).
- 1.2 These Regulations come into force on 31 August 2016 and their provisions apply to all students enrolling on or after that date. Their provisions also apply to students enrolled before 31 August 2016 to the extent that they do not detract from the rights afforded to students under the Regulations in force on 30 August 2016.
- 1.3 These Regulations supplement the University's general academic Regulations, which also apply to the awards of MA/MSc by Research, MPhil and PhD.
- 1.4 A student who wishes to make any change to their programme of studies shall submit a request to the relevant Board of Examiners. If approved, the request shall be deemed to take effect from the date the request is submitted to the School Office for consideration.

## 2. MA/MSc by Research, MPhil and PhD

### MA/MSc by Research

- 2.1 The degree of MA by Research or MSc by Research is awarded to a student who, having completed a period of supervised research, embodies that research in a thesis that has been assessed by a successful oral examination of the candidate.
  - 2.1.1 A successful candidate for the degree of MA/MSc by Research shall demonstrate through the presentation of a scholarly thesis and by oral examination:
    - a) a systematic and critical understanding of a body of knowledge in the academic discipline, field of study or creative domain to which the research relates;
    - b) an understanding of the research techniques in the relevant academic discipline, field of study or creative domain to which the research relates;
    - c) application of knowledge and research techniques;
    - d) critical evaluation of the subject of the research.

The College Research Degrees Board shall satisfy itself that the student has adequately undertaken the appropriate research and professional skills training identified in the initial Training Needs Analysis and has maintained a Personal Development Plan and has identified progress against research objectives.

- 2.1.2 A candidate for the degree of MA/MSc by Research may submit other work in part fulfilment of the obligation to submit a thesis with the approval of the College Research Degrees Board. The College Research Degrees Board shall determine the number of words to be contained in the written thesis.

## MPhil

- 2.2 The degree of MPhil is awarded to a student who, having completed a period of supervised research, embodies that research in a thesis that has been assessed by a successful oral examination of the candidate.
- 2.2.1 A successful candidate for the degree of MPhil shall demonstrate through the presentation of a scholarly thesis and by oral examination:
- (a) a systematic and critical understanding of a substantial body of knowledge in the academic discipline, field of study or creative domain to which the research relates;
  - (b) a comprehensive understanding of the research techniques in the relevant academic discipline, field of study or creative domain to which the research relates;
  - (c) originality in the application of knowledge and research techniques;
  - (d) critical evaluation of the subject of the research.

The College Research Degrees Board shall satisfy itself that the student has adequately undertaken the appropriate research and professional skills training identified in the initial Training Needs Analysis and has maintained a Personal Development Plan and has identified progress against research objectives.

- 2.2.2 A candidate for the degree of MPhil may submit other work in part fulfilment of the obligation to submit a thesis with the approval of the College Research Degrees Board. The College Research Degrees Board shall determine the number of words to be contained in the written thesis.

## PhD

- 2.3 The degree of PhD is awarded to a student who, having completed a period of supervised research, embodies that research in a thesis that has been assessed by a successful oral examination of the candidate.
- 2.3.1 A successful candidate for the degree of PhD shall demonstrate through the presentation of a scholarly thesis and by oral examination:
- (a) a systematic and critical understanding of the body of knowledge at the forefront of the academic discipline, field of study or creative domain to which the research relates;
  - (b) a detailed understanding of research techniques consistent with advanced academic enquiry in the relevant academic discipline, field of study or creative domain to which the research relates;
  - (c) the ability to conceive, implement and, where appropriate, modify a plan of research capable of creating new knowledge at the forefront of the academic discipline, field of study or creative domain;
  - (d) an original contribution to the body of knowledge of an academic discipline, field of study or academic domain in a way that extends the forefront of that academic

discipline, field of study or creative domain and which would warrant publication in the judgment of peers;

- (e) the ability of the candidate to undertake further research without supervision, such research being of the kind that would warrant publication in the judgement of peers.

The College Research Degrees Board shall satisfy itself that the student has adequately undertaken the appropriate research and professional skills training identified in the initial Training Needs Analysis and has maintained a Personal Development Plan and has identified progress against research objectives.

- 2.3.2 A candidate for the degree of PhD may submit other work in part fulfilment of the obligation to submit a thesis with the approval of the College Research Degrees Board. The College Research Degrees Board shall determine the number of words to be contained in the written thesis.

### **3. PhD by Published Work**

The regulations for PhD by Published Work are published separately.

### **4. MA/MSc by Practice-Based Research, MPhil by Practice, PhD by Practice**

- 4.1 A candidate for the degree of MA/MSc by Practice-based Research, MPhil by Practice, PhD by Practice may submit other work in part fulfilment of the obligation to submit a thesis with the approval of the College Research Degrees Board. A practice-based research degree entails a practitioner producing a body of work accompanied by an associated critical commentary. Appropriate records (aural, visual etc.) of the practice, together with commentaries, will then comprise the main body of the portfolio submitted in place of the thesis for examination. The commentary must establish, in a way that can be assessed by oral examination, that the portfolio constitutes a coherent body of original work and that the student fulfils all other requirements for the conferment of the requisite degree PhD. The commentary for a PhD by Practice shall be between 25,000 and 40,000 words in length.

- 4.1.1 The College Research Degrees Board shall determine whether the student is required to undertake research and professional skills training and, if so, the arrangements for research and professional skills training.

- 4.1.2 Save in the submission of a body of work related to practice, a candidate for the practice-based degree shall satisfy all other requirements of these regulations, including the minimum and maximum periods of enrolment for full-time and part-time modes of study.

### **5. Enrolment**

- 5.1 Enrolment establishes an individual's status as a student of the University.

- 5.2 Enrolment is the agreement between the University and the student under which:

- (a) The University provides a programme of studies for the student and makes available to the student the other academic services and facilities associated with that programme of studies;

- (b) The University confers the award for which the student is registered where the student satisfies the Board of Examiners of their entitlement to receive that award;
- (c) The University and the student agree to be bound by the University's regulations;
- (d) The student undertakes to pay the fee for the programme of studies and any other charges levied by the University in respect of the programme of studies and the provision of other academic services and facilities associated with the programme of studies. Students are expected to pay their fees, or make arrangements for the future payment of fees, at enrolment;
- (e) The student undertakes to do anything else required by the University that concerns the student's following of a programme of studies, receipt of other academic services and the use of facilities associated with a programme of studies;

5.3 An individual is not certified as a student until they have completed the relevant enrolment process as requested by the University and their enrolment authorised by a designated member of staff of the University.

5.4 An individual who is not enrolled as a student of the University shall not be allowed to follow any part of the programme of studies and shall not be considered at the relevant Board of Examiners.

5.5 The periods of enrolment shall normally be as follows:

	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
<b>MA/MSc by Research</b>		
full-time	9 months	16 months
part-time	14 months	24 months
<b>MPhil</b>		
full-time	18 months	32 months
part-time	27 months	48 months
<b>PhD (via transfer from MPhil enrolment and including that period of enrolment)</b>		
full-time	27 months	48 months
part-time	41 months	72 months
<b>PhD (direct)</b>		
full-time	27 months	48 months
part-time	41 months	72 months

5.6 A student may enrol on a full-time or part-time basis. Where a student enrolls for a full-time programme, they shall be expected to devote as much time to the research as would be given to full-time employment.

5.7 Re-enrolment will take place annually within the one month of the anniversary of the first enrolment. Re-enrolment is subject to annual deadlines and eligible students who fail to re-enrol may be deemed by the University to have terminated their enrolment, and the University's obligations to them.

## 6. Attendance

- 6.1 Full-time and part-time students are expected to be in attendance at the University during term time including any periods of formal examination or other assessment. In the case of a student following a programme of studies by distance learning, attendance means demonstrable activity on the programme of studies.
- 6.2 Each School is responsible for monitoring student attendance and registers will normally be taken on a regular basis. There is a statutory responsibility placed upon universities to monitor attendance of international students who are in the UK on a Tier 4 visa and to report to the Home Office when a student has been found not to be engaging with their course. International students attending the University of Lincoln must comply with the conditions of their visa. In addition, students are required to note that the University of Lincoln must comply with its legal obligations to the United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI) as a Tier 4 sponsor. Students found to be in breach of the conditions of their visa in relation to attendance will, unless they are able to show good reasons/extenuating circumstances, have their Tier 4 sponsorship withdrawn and, consequently, their enrolment at the University terminated. For the full list of conditions of the Tier 4 visa, please refer to the UKVI website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>.
- 6.3 To ensure compliance with UKVI rules, all international students must show evidence that they have the right to remain and study in the UK. Students who have limited leave to remain in the UK must, on request by the University, present evidence that they have valid leave to be in the UK and have not allowed their leave to lapse during their study.
- 6.4 The University may temporarily suspend from study a student who is unable to provide one of the following on request:
- evidence of valid leave to be in the UK
  - proof that an in-time visa application to remain has been submitted
  - proof that they have exited the UK
- 6.5 A student whose study has been temporarily suspended shall be allowed fifteen working days to provide the evidence requested. During the period of suspension under 6.4 (including the 15 working days under this section) no submission of University work shall be accepted and students shall not be eligible to attend assessments. If evidence is not provided in that period, the University shall terminate the student's enrolment.
- 6.6 A student whose enrolment has been terminated under this regulation may appeal in writing to the Tier 4 Compliance team within ten working days of termination of their enrolment. Such appeals must be sent to [tier4compliance@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:tier4compliance@lincoln.ac.uk) and supported by appropriate evidence to show why the termination was not justified. The Tier 4 Compliance team shall make the final decision in respect of the student's status and communicate this to the student.
- 6.7 Where a student is not in attendance, the University may suspend or terminate the student's enrolment. The University shall act fairly in taking such a decision.
- 6.8 The University shall adopt a policy on student attendance under these regulations, which shall from time to time be reviewed, and, where necessary, be revised.



## **7. Progression**

- 7.1 For all Research Degrees, the College Research Degrees Board shall identify progress against research objectives and any required skills training. Progress records shall be confirmed by the College Research Degrees Board on at least an annual basis. The Board shall satisfy itself on the basis of:

### For MPhil and PhD students

submission of satisfactory Confirmation of Studies and relevant ethical approval forms normally within three months of enrolment for full-time students, or six months for part-time students;

submission of a satisfactory Annual Report form thereafter (on transfer from MPhil to PhD, a satisfactory Transfer Report is deemed also to constitute a satisfactory Annual Report for the purposes of this regulation, if it is approved at the normal interval for an Annual Report).

### For MA/MSc by Research students:

submission of satisfactory Confirmation of Studies and relevant ethical approval forms normally within three months of enrolment for full-time students, or six months for part-time students.

- 7.2 Upon receipt of the progress record, the student transcript and any additional information that it has required, the College Research Degrees Board shall:
- (a) confirm whether the academic progression of the student shall continue;
  - (b) require itself to be satisfied as to any other academic matters it thinks fit in relation to the research programme.

- 7.3 Where, having reviewed a student's progress, the College Research Degrees Board approves progression, the student shall complete the University's procedures for re-enrolment.

## **8. Extenuating Circumstances**

- 8.1 Extenuating circumstances are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances, beyond a student's control, which may have had a serious and adverse effect upon their assessed work.
- 8.2 It is the responsibility of the student to attend examinations, submit coursework for assessment as required and by the due date, and to provide the University Extenuating Circumstances Panel, in advance of the meeting of the Board of Examiners, with any relevant information on exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that may have adversely affected their assessment performance.
- 8.3 If a student claims that their performance has been adversely affected by extenuating circumstances, it is their responsibility to ensure that the evidence of such extenuating circumstances is provided, documented and independently substantiated, at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 8.4 Students are responsible for ensuring that claims for Extenuating Circumstances to be

taken into account are submitted prior to the meeting of the Board of Examiners where the relevant progression would normally be considered.

- 8.5 Students may not normally use any disability or illness that is catered for by a Student Wellbeing Centre Needs Assessment as the basis for an Extenuating Circumstances application. The only exception to this might be the unexpected emergence of an underlying disability or illness which required further support. An Extenuating Circumstances application might be made in such circumstances but would be subject to the normal requirement for supporting evidence.
- 8.6 Where there is documented evidence of extenuating circumstances that will prevent attendance at an examination, or submission of a final piece of coursework on the agreed date, this should be presented to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel in advance of the assessment date. Where there are known and documented circumstances that will take place at a future date (for example, a hospital appointment for an operation which coincides with a formal examination) students are encouraged to submit these applications in advance. Though this may not be normal practice there may be some circumstances where an application should be made in advance.
- 8.7 The Board of Examiners shall normally treat the submission of extenuating circumstances as a request by the student for the Board to void the mark for the original assessment(s) to which the claim relates. Consequently, where a claim of extenuating circumstances is successful, a student shall normally be required to be reassessed, on the basis of a first sitting, in the relevant assessment items.
- 8.8 Circumstances accepted as valid by the University Extenuating Circumstances Panel are forwarded to the relevant Board of Examiners which shall consider whether or not the circumstances have affected performance in assessment and apply the decision concerning assessment.
- 8.9 For students enrolled on programmes leading towards a professional accredited qualification, circumstances accepted as valid by the University Extenuating Circumstances Panel, or where appropriate, shall be forwarded to the relevant Fitness to Practise Panel. Fitness to Practise Panels shall consider the circumstances in relation to the Fitness to Practise Policy for the programme upon which the student is enrolled and shall forward its recommendation to the relevant Board of Examiners.
- 8.10 Claims received too late for consideration by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, and hence by the Board of Examiners, will be accepted only if the student can demonstrate there was good reason for the late application. The time limit for receipt of late applications is 10 working days following the release of results.
- 8.11 Where the Extenuating Circumstances Panel has not accepted a claim by a student as valid, and the student wishes to dispute the Panel's decision, it is open to them to request a Review in accordance with section B1 of the University General Regulations.
- 8.12 The responsibilities of students and Boards of Examiners in respect of circumstances that might adversely affect a student's performance are set out in detail in Annex A.
- 8.13 A claim for extenuating circumstances shall not be available to a student as a means to avoid an application of these Regulations to allegations of having committed an academic offence in relation to assessment.

## **9. Supervision**

- 9.1 At enrolment, the Head of School (or equivalent) shall appoint the student's supervisors. Supervisors shall have undertaken mandatory supervisory training and undertake on-going professional development through a recognised training programme in liaison with the Educational and Development Enhancement Unit.
- 9.2 A team shall be appointed to supervise the student. The student's supervisory team shall consist of at least two supervisors, at least one of whom shall have experience of supervising the relevant or higher research degree to completion. For students enrolled on an MPhil with the possibility of transfer to PhD, this would normally mean experience of supervision to PhD completion.
- 9.3 One supervisor shall be the Director of Studies (first supervisor) with responsibility for supervision of the student on a regular and frequent basis with a normal minimum expectation that they will meet with their students on a monthly basis (for full-time students) or every two months (for part-time students)
- 9.4 The College Research Degrees Board shall confirm whether the arrangements for the supervision of a programme are adequate at the time of consideration of the student's research plan.
- 9.5 The College Research Degrees Board shall be notified of any proposals to change the supervisory arrangements for a programme of research and shall decide whether to approve such changes.
- 9.6 A student for a research degree of the University shall be ineligible to act as a Director of Studies for another research degree student but may act as a second supervisor or adviser.

## **10. Transfer of Research Degree**

- 10.1 Transfer requests must be made by the end of twelve months from first registration for full-time and twenty-four months from first registration for part-time students. A College Research Degrees Board may require that remedial work be undertaken before a request can be approved and in such a case the work will need to be completed within three months for full-time and six months for part-time students from the date of the College Research Degrees Board. Where an application is declined on its second submission, the College Research Degrees Board will decide to either withdraw the student or offer an alternative qualification route. No further transfer requests will be considered.
- 10.2 When a student enrolled for a MA/MSc by Research wishes to transfer to either an MPhil only or an MPhil with the possibility of transfer to PhD, the following shall apply:
- (a) The student shall prepare a report comprising no more than 3,000 words in support of the request. The report should demonstrate that the work has progressed sufficiently, and include a proposal for future work. The report shall be signed by the student's supervisors and endorsed as appropriate;
  - (b) A small sub-group of appropriate academic staff comprising no more than three members shall meet with the student to explore the merits of the proposed transfer. At least two members of the sub-group shall be experienced in making judgments regarding the transition between research degrees. The student's

Director of Studies, or another nominated member of the supervisory team, may attend the sub-group in an advisory capacity only. The Director of Studies will not be a member of the sub-group.

- (c) The sub-group shall make a recommendation to the College Research Degrees Board as to whether the student should be allowed to transfer to an MPhil only or an MPhil with the possibility of transfer to PhD.
- (d) The College Research Degrees Board shall consider the recommendation and decide whether to allow the transfer to an MPhil only or an MPhil with the possibility of transfer to PhD.

10.3 When a student enrolled for either an MPhil only or an MPhil with the possibility of transfer to PhD wishes to transfer to PhD, the following shall apply:

- (a) The student shall prepare a report comprising no more than 5,000 words in support of the request. The report should demonstrate that the work has sufficiently progressed and provide evidence of the development to PhD. The report shall be signed by the student's supervisors and endorsed as appropriate.
- (b) A small sub-group of appropriate academic staff nominated by the College Research Degrees Board comprising no more than three members shall meet with the student to explore the merits of the proposed transfer. At least two members of the sub-group shall be experienced in making judgments regarding the transition from MPhil to PhD. The student's Director of Studies, or another nominated member of the supervisory team, may attend the sub-group in an advisory capacity only. The Director of Studies will not be a member of the sub-group.
- (c) The sub-group shall make a recommendation to the College Research Degrees Board as to whether the student should be allowed to transfer to PhD.
- (d) The College Research Degrees Board shall consider the recommendation and decide whether to allow the transfer to PhD. The College Research Degrees Board may choose to request further information from the student's supervisors before making a final decision.

10.4 Any student who is enrolled for the degree of PhD and who is unable to complete the approved programme of research may, at any time prior to the submission of the thesis for examination, apply to the College Research Degrees Board to be enrolled as a candidate for an MPhil or MA/MSc by Research. Any candidate enrolled for the degree of MPhil may similarly apply for enrolment for MA/MSc by Research.

In the case of such transfer of enrolment, the latest date for completion shall be determined as follows. If the student is within twelve months (full-time) or eighteen months (part-time) of the original latest completion date, that date shall stand. If the student is more than twelve months (full-time) or eighteen months (part-time) prior to the latest completion date that would have been applied had he or she been enrolled on the new programme of research from the outset, then that latest completion date shall be applied. Otherwise, a new latest completion date twelve months (full-time) or eighteen months (part-time) from the date of the College Research Degrees Board that approves the transfer shall apply.

## 11. Examinations

- 11.1 The College Research Degrees Board is the Board of Examiners for the degrees of MA/MSc by Research, MPhil and PhD.
- 11.2 The examination for the MA/MSc by Research, MPhil and PhD shall have two stages:
- (a) the submission and preliminary assessment of the thesis, and
  - (b) its defence by oral or approved alternative examination (see paragraph 11.4)

Where a student is to be examined on approved work submitted in part fulfilment of the requirement for a thesis, the College Board of Examiners shall be satisfied that the examination arrangements are appropriate to allow an effective oral examination of the student. To this end, the College Board of Examiners shall direct, where it thinks fit, the additional arrangements to be made.

### PhD

Full-time students shall submit their thesis for examination within three years of first registration for the degree or, exceptionally, by no later than the end of the fourth year of registration. No extension will be permitted.

Part-time students shall submit their thesis for examination within seven years of first registration. No extension will be permitted.

- 11.3 The decision to present the thesis for examination is the sole responsibility of the student.
- 11.4 A student shall normally be examined orally on the thesis. The purpose of the oral examination is to confirm the preliminary assessment of the thesis. Where for reasons of sickness, disability or comparable valid cause the College Board of Examiners is satisfied that a student would be under serious disadvantage if required to undergo an oral examination, an alternative interactive examination may be approved. Such approval shall not be given on the grounds that the student's knowledge of the language in which the thesis is presented is inadequate.
- 11.5 The degree of MA/MSc by Research, MPhil or PhD may be awarded posthumously on the basis of a thesis completed by a student which is ready for submission for examination. In such cases the College Board of Examiners shall seek evidence that the student would have been likely to have been successful had the oral examination taken place (see section 16 for further information).
- 11.6 An Independent Chair, appointed by the External Examiners' Committee, must be present at all oral examinations. Their role includes the following:
- (a) to attend the oral examination and ensure fairness in the way it is conducted;
  - (b) to ensure that the University's regulations are adhered to;
  - (c) to ensure that the outcome of the oral examination is appropriately communicated to both the student and the relevant entities in the University.

The Independent Chair is not expected to read the thesis, make any contribution to its evaluation at any stage or to contribute to the academic judgment on the outcome of the oral examination.

- 11.7 In any instance where the College Board of Examiners is made aware, by the independent Chair, of a failure to comply with all the procedures of the examination process, it may annul the examination and direct such arrangements as it sees fit for the conduct of the examination.
- 11.8 The College Board of Examiners shall make a decision on the reports and recommendation of the Examiners in respect of the student.

## **12. Examiners**

- 12.1 The Examiners shall be appointed by the External Examiners' Committee within six months prior to thesis submission or at the stage that the student applies for thesis pending.
- 12.2 A student shall be examined by at least two and normally not more than three Examiners of whom at least one shall be an External Examiner. Staff candidates shall be examined by at least two External Examiners and one Internal Examiner.
- 12.3 An Internal Examiner shall be either:
- (a) a member of staff of the University; or
  - (b) a member of staff of the student's Collaborating Establishment.
- 12.4 A person who has supervised the student or who has acted as an adviser to the student shall not be appointed as an Examiner.
- 12.5 Examiners shall be experienced in research in the general area of the student's thesis and, where practicable, have experience as a specialist in the topic(s) to be examined.
- 12.6 For MPhil or PhD, at least one External Examiner shall have substantial experience (that is, normally three or more previous examinations as either an internal or external examiner) of examining research degree students at the appropriate level or above.
- For MA/MSc by Research, at least one External Examiner shall either have experience (that is, one or more previous examinations as either an internal or external examiner) of examining research degrees at the appropriate level or above, or substantial experience of examining the research element of taught Masters programmes (that is, at least three examinations of such research elements, or experience as the External Examiner for a taught Masters programme).
- 12.7 An External Examiner shall be independent both of the University and of the Collaborating Establishment and shall not have acted previously as the student's supervisor or adviser. An External Examiner shall normally not be a supervisor of another student. For MPhil or PhD, the External Examiner shall not normally be an External Examiner on a taught course in the same department at the University. Former members of staff of the University shall not normally be approved as External Examiners until four years after the termination of their employment with the University.

For MPhil or PhD, the External Examiners' Committee shall ensure that the same External Examiner is not approved so frequently that his or her familiarity with the department might prejudice objective judgment.

12.8 No student for a research degree shall act as an Examiner.

### **13. First Examination**

13.1 Each Examiner shall read and examine the thesis and submit an independent preliminary report before any oral or alternative form of examination is held. In completing the preliminary report, each Examiner shall consider whether the thesis provisionally satisfies the requirements of the degree (set out in paragraphs 2.2.1 and 2.3.1) and where possible make an appropriate provisional recommendation subject to the outcome of any oral examination.

13.2 Following the oral examination the Examiners shall, where they are in agreement, submit a joint report and recommendation relating to the award of the degree to the College Board of Examiners. The preliminary reports and joint recommendation of the Examiners shall together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable the College Board of Examiners to satisfy itself that the recommendation chosen in paragraph 13.3 is correct.

Where the Examiners are not in agreement, separate reports and recommendations shall be submitted.

13.3 Following the completion of the examination, the Examiners shall recommend to the College Board of Examiners that:

- (a) the student is awarded the degree; or
- (b) subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis, the student is awarded the degree (amendments to be completed within three months); or
- (c) subject to substantive amendments being made to the thesis, the student is awarded the degree (to be completed within six months); or
- (d) the student is given the opportunity, on one occasion, to be re-examined for the degree, with or without an oral examination (amendments and re-examination to take place within twelve months); or
- (e) the student is not awarded the degree submitted for and not permitted to be re-examined.
- (f) the student is awarded a lower degree reflecting the standard of work achieved – an MA/MSc by Research may be awarded to candidates submitting for an MPhil.

Where the student has submitted for the degree of PhD or Professional Doctorate but has not attained the PhD or Professional Doctorate standard as cited in Regulation 2.3.1, the Examiners may recommend that student is awarded the degree of MPhil where they are satisfied that the MPhil standard, as cited in Regulation 2.2.1, has been met. This recommendation may be subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis.

13.3.1 In paragraph 13.3, the term 'minor amendment' includes amendments to grammar, typography, notation, number and format and the provision of minor clarifications. The

number of such amendments or clarifications shall not affect their nature as minor amendments.

- 13.3.2 In paragraph 13.3, the term 'substantive amendment' refers to the need to correct, in an otherwise valid thesis, an error or a number of interconnected errors, in a central principle, technique or method. Where the existence of an error in a central principle, technique or method, or the cumulative effect of such errors, brings the validity of the thesis into question, then the Examiners shall recommend either that the student should be re-examined or that the degree should not be awarded and there should not be an opportunity for re-examination.
- 13.3.3 Where the Examiners are agreed that subject to minor or substantive amendments to the thesis the student shall be awarded the degree, they shall notify the student in writing of the nature of the required amendments. It is a matter for the Examiners to decide whether such amendments are approved by the whole examining team or whether the responsibility is delegated to one member of the examining team. Confirmation of approval of the amendments shall be communicated informally to the student by the agreed member of the examining team within two months of their submission. The final decision shall rest with the College Board of Examiners.
- 13.3.4 Examiners may indicate informally their recommendation on the result of the examination to the student but they shall make it clear that the decision rests with the College Board of Examiners.
- 13.4 Where the Examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, the College Board of Examiners may:
- (a) accept a majority recommendation (provided that the majority recommendation includes at least one External Examiner);
  - (b) accept the recommendation of the External Examiner; or
  - (c) require the appointment of an additional External Examiner.
- 13.4.1 Where an additional External Examiner is appointed under paragraph 13.4 (c) they shall prepare an independent preliminary report on the basis of the thesis and, if considered necessary, may conduct a further oral examination. That Examiner shall not be informed of the recommendations of the other Examiners. On receipt of the report from the additional Examiner the College Board of Examiners shall make its decision in accordance with paragraph 11.8.
- 13.5 Where the College Board of Examiners decides that the degree not be awarded and that no re-examination be permitted, the Examiners shall prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, which shall be forwarded to the student by the College Board of Examiners.

## **14. Re-Examination**

- 14.1 One re-examination may be permitted, subject to the following requirements:
- (a) a student who fails to satisfy the Examiners at the first examination, including where appropriate the oral or approved alternative examination (see paragraph 11.4), on the recommendation of the Examiners and with the approval of the College Board of Examiners, may be permitted to be re-examined;



- (b) the Examiners shall provide the student, through the College Board of Examiners, with written guidance on the deficiencies in the first examination; and
  - (c) the student shall submit for re-examination no earlier than 6 months and normally no longer than 12 months (no longer than 12 months for MA/MSc by Research) from the date of the latest part of the first examination. Where the College Board of Examiners has approved (under paragraph 11.4) an alternative to the oral examination the re-examination shall take place no earlier than 6 months and normally no longer than 12 months (no longer than 12 months for MA/MSc by Research) from the date of this approval. The College Board of Examiners may approve alterations to these periods.
- 14.2 The College Board of Examiners may require that an additional External Examiner be appointed for the re-examination.
- 14.3 There are four forms of re-examination:
- (a) where the student's performance in the first oral or approved alternative examination was satisfactory but the thesis was unsatisfactory, and the Examiners on re-examination find that the thesis as revised is satisfactory, the College Board of Examiners may exempt the student from further examination, oral or otherwise;
  - (b) where the student's performance in the first oral or approved alternative examination was unsatisfactory and the thesis was also unsatisfactory, any re-examination shall include a re-examination of the thesis and an oral or approved alternative examination;
  - (c) where on the first examination the thesis was so unsatisfactory that the College Board of Examiners abandoned the oral examination, any re-examination shall include a re-examination of the thesis and an oral or approved alternative examination;
  - (d) where on the first examination the thesis was deemed satisfactory but the performance in the oral and/or other examination was unsatisfactory, the Examiners shall recommend to the College Board of Examiners the form of re-examination, subject to time limits described in sub-paragraph 14.1(c).
- 14.4 In the case of a re-examination under sub-paragraph 14.3(a), (b), (c), or, where appropriate, (d), each Examiner shall read and examine the thesis and submit an independent preliminary report before any oral or alternative examination is held. In completing the preliminary report, each Examiner shall consider whether the thesis provisionally satisfies the requirements of the degree (as set out in paragraphs 2.1.1, 2.2.1 and 2.3.1) and where possible make an appropriate provisional recommendation subject to the outcome of any oral examination.
- 14.5 Following the oral re-examination of the thesis under sub-paragraph 14.3(b), (c) or where appropriate, (d), the Examiners shall, where they are in agreement, submit a joint report and recommendation relating to the award of the degree. The preliminary reports and joint recommendation shall together provide sufficiently detailed comments to enable the College Board of Examiners to satisfy itself that the recommendation (see paragraph 14.6) is correct.

Where the Examiners are not in agreement, separate reports and recommendations shall be submitted.

- 14.6 Following the completion of the examination, the Examiners shall recommend to the College Board of Examiners that:
- (a) the student is awarded the degree; or
  - (b) subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis, the student is awarded the degree (amendments to be completed within three months); or
  - (c) subject to substantive amendments being made to the thesis, (to be completed within six months) the student is awarded the degree; or
  - (d) the student is not awarded the degree or
  - (e) the student is awarded a lower degree reflecting the standard of work achieved – an MA/MSc by Research may be awarded to candidates submitting for an MPhil.
- 14.7 Where the Examiners are agreed that subject to minor or substantive amendments to the thesis the student shall be awarded the degree, they shall inform the student in writing of the nature of the required amendments. It is a matter for the Examiners to decide whether such amendments are approved by the whole examining team or whether the responsibility is delegated to one member of the examining team.
- 14.7.1 Examiners may indicate informally their recommendation on the result of the examination to the student, but they shall make it clear that the decision rests with the College Board of Examiners.
- 14.8 Where the Examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, the College Board of Examiners shall consider all reports and may require the appointment of an additional External Examiner.
- 14.9 Where an additional External Examiner is appointed under paragraph 13.4, they shall prepare an independent preliminary report on the basis of the thesis, and, if necessary, may conduct a further oral examination. The additional External Examiner shall not be informed of the recommendation of the other Examiners. The College Board of Examiners shall make a decision on the report and recommendation of the additional examiner.
- 14.10 Where the College Board of Examiners decides that the degree not be awarded, the Examiners shall prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, which shall be forwarded to the student.

## **15. The Thesis**

- 15.1 The text of the thesis shall not exceed the following limits on length (excluding ancillary data);
- (a) 80,000 words for a PhD
  - (b) 40,000 words for an MPhil
  - (c) 25,000 words for a MA/MSc by Research
  - (d) 25,000 to 40,000 words for a PhD by Practice commentary
  - (e) 25,000 words for an MPhil by Practice commentary

- (f) 15,000 words for an MA/MSc by Practice-based Research commentary

### **Submission of the thesis for examination**

- 15.2 The student must submit two loose bound copies of the written thesis (or one for each Examiner where there is more than two Examiners) to the appropriate College Office for examination.
- 15.3 The thesis must be submitted in the following format. Fuller guidance can be located in the British Standards Specification BS 4821 (1990). Where these regulations differ in points of detail from BS 4821 the student may follow either.
- (a) Except with permission from the College Research Degrees Board the thesis must be presented in English. Where the thesis is presented in a language other than English, a summary in English shall be included comprising up to 4,000 words.
  - (b) An abstract comprising no more than 500 words must be bound into the thesis which shall provide a synopsis of the thesis, the nature and scope of the work and the original contribution to knowledge.
  - (c) A loose copy of the abstract must be submitted with the thesis which includes the name of the author, the degree for which the thesis is submitted and the title of the thesis as a heading.
  - (d) Where the work has been part of a collaborative group project, the thesis must clearly indicate the student's individual contribution and the extent of the collaboration.
  - (e) Theses must be submitted in A4 format except with the permission of the College Research Degrees Board.
  - (f) Theses must be presented in a permanent and legible form in either typescript or print. The size and character in the main text shall not be less than 2mm for capitals and 1.5mm for x-height (i.e. the height of lower case x).
  - (g) The thesis must be printed on the recto side of the page only; the paper must be white and within the 70g/m<sup>2</sup> to 100g/m<sup>2</sup> range.
  - (h) Where the use of coloured maps, diagrams or other illustrative material is integral to the comprehension of the argument, these must be reproduced in colour in the thesis.
  - (i) The margin at the left hand binding edge of the page must be not less than 40mm; other margins must be not less than 15mm.
  - (j) Double or one-and-a-half spacing must be used in the typescript except for indented quotations or footnotes where single spacing may be used.
  - (k) Pages must be numbered consecutively through the main text including photographs and/or diagrams included as whole pages.

(l) The main title page must provide the following information:

- a. The full title of the thesis
- b. The full name of the author
- c. The award for which the thesis is submitted
- d. The collaborating establishment (if any)
- e. The month and year of submission

### **Submission of the final thesis**

- 15.4 After successful examination (or after satisfactory completion of required amendments) a candidate for a research degree must provide a permanently bound final version of the thesis together with an electronic copy.
- 15.5 Electronic copies will be published on the University's repository site.
- 15.6 Any copies of the thesis (bound or electronic) submitted to the University remain the property of the University.

### **Confidentiality of the thesis**

- 15.7 Exceptionally, the College Research Degrees Board may agree that a thesis should remain confidential for a period of time on the written request of the student (which must accompany the thesis at the time of submission). The period of time shall not normally exceed two years.
- 15.8 Where a College Research Degrees Board has agreed that a thesis may remain confidential the thesis, immediately on submission, shall only be made available to those directly involved in the supervision of the student or the examination process. This includes the examiners and members of the College Research Degrees Board or College Board of Examiners.
- 15.9 On completion of the examination process, the final copies of the thesis (see 15.4) shall be held by the College Office and only released to the relevant libraries at the end of the period of confidentiality approved by the College Research Degrees Board.

## **16. Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards**

- 16.1 In a situation where a student's performance has been seriously adversely affected by ill health the University Regulations permit a Board of Examiners to make an Aegrotat award of the degree in question. For a postgraduate research student, this would normally be made only in exceptional circumstances when a student is prevented from completing the award because of their medical condition.
- 16.2 A College Research Degrees Board should recommend conferment of such an award only in the following circumstances:
- The student has given written permission to accept such an award
  - The Board is assured that the student is unable, because of serious ill health, to complete their research work and thesis preparation in order to be assessed in the normal manner

- There is substantial and sufficient evidence available that the student has the ability and potential to achieve their chosen research degree award were it not for the extenuating circumstances
- There is significant evidence available in the form of a draft thesis or draft components of a thesis (or other documents or products of research) that the student would have been capable of producing a scholarly thesis of the required standard
- There is evidence available from the duration of registration and the quality of results achieved to date that the student has demonstrated a significant capacity to undertake original research and would in normal circumstances have been able to meet all the criteria for the award in question as specified in the award regulations.

16.3 Where it will not be possible for a thesis to be examined or a *viva voce* examination to be carried out, the College Research Degrees Boards shall recommend the appointment of examiners to the External Examiners' Committee. The Board should request the examiners to review the evidence available and to recommend whether an Aegrotat award is merited taking into account the student's special circumstances.

16.4 A research degree may be awarded posthumously to a candidate when a draft thesis has been produced but the final assessment has not taken place. The College Research Degrees Board shall recommend the appointment of examiners to the External Examiners' Committee to review the thesis material and assure themselves and the Board that the student would have been successful if it had been possible for the examination to take place in the normal manner.

## **17. Appeal against the Examination Decisions of the College Research Degrees Board**

Current University Regulations on Appeals apply. See Part B of the University General Regulations 2016/2017.

## **Annex A – Extenuating Circumstances: Additional Information**

### **1. Responsibilities of Students**

- (a) It is the responsibility of the student to attend examinations, submit coursework for assessment as required and by the due date, and to provide the University Extenuating Circumstances Panel, in advance of its meeting, with relevant evidence where exceptional and unforeseen circumstances may have adversely affected their performance in assessments
- (b) If a student claims that their performance has been adversely affected by extenuating circumstances, and submits an application for these circumstances to be taken into account, it is their responsibility to ensure that the evidence of such extenuating circumstances is provided, documented and independently substantiated..
- (c) Students must apply for extenuating circumstances via the online system
- (d) If a student wishes to submit an application for extenuating circumstances, they are strongly advised to talk this through with an appropriate member of staff (e.g. academic tutor), in the first instance.
- (e) Individual students are responsible for ensuring that applications for Extenuating Circumstances to be taken into account are submitted prior to the meeting of the Board of Examiners where the relevant assessments would normally be considered.
- (f) Applications can be withdrawn by the student at any time up until the meeting of the University Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

### **2. Extenuating Circumstances which Adversely Affect Performance in Assessment**

The following are examples of circumstances that may be treated as adversely affecting a student's performance in assessment. This list is not exhaustive.

- (a) Illness affecting attendance at teaching or assessment;
- (b) Illness affecting preparation for or of an assessment;
- (c) Being the victim of a crime involving injury;
- (d) Circumstances of a serious personal or emotional nature;
- (e) Force majeure or other unpreventable event.

### **3. University Extenuating Circumstances Panel**

3.1 A student's claim for extenuating circumstances in assessment shall be considered by the University Extenuating Circumstances Panel having regard to the following:

- (a) The authenticity of evidence produced: is the evidence documented and verified by an independent and authoritative person not personally connected to the student e.g. a doctor, counsellor, police officer, etc?
- (b) The contemporaneity of the evidence: is the evidence up to date and relevant to the assessment claimed to have been affected.

## **Disability or Long Term Illness**

- 3.2 Where the claim relates to a long term illness or disability that would be defined as a disability under the Equality Act (2010)<sup>1</sup>, and which may be more appropriately treated as requiring special support, the University Extenuating Circumstances Panel should establish whether the circumstances were known to the student and the University at the time of admission or enrolment.
- (a) Where a long term illness or disability was not present, or not known to the student, at the time of enrolment, the circumstances may be dealt with by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel for those assessments being undertaken during the current period of enrolment. Future assessments shall be dealt with in accordance with University practice for the support of students with a disability or long term illness and students should contact the Disability Service for further advice. Unless there is good reason for non disclosure of the circumstances at an earlier time the Extenuating Circumstances Panel shall not consider assessments undertaken in previous enrolment periods.
- (b) Where a long term illness or disability was present and known to the student at the time of enrolment, but the student did not disclose this to the University, these circumstances shall not normally, unless there was good reason for non disclosure, be considered as grounds for consideration by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.
- (c) Where a long term illness or disability was present and made known to the University at the time of admission or enrolment a needs assessment identifying additional support requirements will be undertaken. The disability or long term illness shall not be considered as an Extenuating Circumstance where a needs assessment has been provided by the University's Disability Service.

## **4. Boards of Examiners**

- 4.1 Where it is deemed that circumstances have occurred which could have adversely affected the student's performance, the University Extenuating Circumstances Panel shall forward these to the relevant Board of Examiners or, where appropriate, to the relevant Fitness to Practise Panel.

The Board of Examiners shall consider whether, on the basis of the assessment profile, it is reasonable to conclude that the circumstances have actually affected performance.

Cases referred to a Fitness to Practise Panel shall be considered in relation to the Fitness to Practise Regulations and recommendations forwarded to the Board of Examiners.

- 4.2 Normally no student shall be eligible for an award or progression until such time as the Board of Examiners has sufficient evidence to satisfy itself that the student has achieved the appropriate standard for the award or progression. Extenuating circumstances can never compensate for insufficient evidence, provided through assessment, of achievement of the standard for an award or progression.

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<sup>1</sup> In the Act, a person has a disability if, they have a physical or mental impairment; the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

For the purposes of the Act, these words have the following meanings: 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial 'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions).

## 5. Outcomes

5.1 Where a student's performance is found to have been adversely affected by circumstances, the Board of Examiners shall apply the following:

### For Research Degree students

- (a) The student shall be allowed extra time in which to complete their thesis or make amendments following initial examination. The College Research Degrees Board shall decide upon the length of time permitted, taking into account the extent of the circumstances, agreeing an extension to the period of registration where required.
- (b) Where extenuating circumstances arise during the *viva voce* examination, such as unexpected illness, and the examination is adversely affected, the student shall be allowed to be examined or re-examined, as if for the first time. Where extenuating circumstances arise prior to the *viva voce* starting, it should be rescheduled, preferably giving at least 24 hours notice to avoid unnecessary disruption of travel arrangements for external examiners.



## **Annex B – Interruption of Study**

A student may interrupt their study at any time during an academic year.

A student may request the College Research Degrees Board to approve a period(s) of interruption to their studies totalling no more than two years across the duration of the award. Where approved, the period(s) of interruption shall be added to the student's original term of registration on the programme.

Students seeking periods of interruption that would result in an overall total of more than two years must first follow the Extenuating Circumstances and submit a claim to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel (ECP). Where the ECP accepts the student's claim of adverse circumstances as valid, it will so advise the College Research Degrees Board, which will consider the student's request for interruption on that basis.

A student's anniversary of enrolment shall be recalculated according to the length of the period of interruption.

Tuition fee liability in the interruption year shall be calculated at 100% of the full tuition fee rate for that year of enrolment.

Students interrupting for 12 months or more shall not be liable for tuition fees for the first 12 months upon resumption of study.

Students interrupting for fewer than 12 months shall not be liable for tuition fees until their recalculated anniversary of enrolment.

### Maternity Leave

Students are entitled to up to 12 months maternity leave, with a mandatory of 2 weeks or 4 weeks if in a factory environment. Any maternity leave is in addition to the maximum 2 years of interruptions available to students.

It is the responsibility of the student to notify their Director of Studies and for members of staff only, Human Resources of their pregnancy.

Students must also notify Student Administration by requesting maternity leave through the current interruption process. In the request they must provide details of the date on which they intend to start maternity-related absence and the date on which they intend to return. This should be done at least 15 weeks before the due date.

The agreed date that the student intends to return may change during the course of the absence and students should notify their Director of Studies and Student Administration as soon as possible of any change in their expected return date.

In exceptional circumstances students may need to extend the length of maternity leave that they take beyond the standard time allowed.

### Paternity Leave

Students are entitled to up to 2 weeks of Paternity leave taken in one week blocks, which must be agreed by their Director of Studies and recorded on their annual leave record. Students can request additional paternity leave which can be taken out of their interruption period. This can be done through the current interruption process.

Where relevant, UKVI requirements in relation to Tier 4 visas will supersede the University's regulations.